

PRESTEIGNE AND NORTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION

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Breton dancing at the Fête du Mouton, Ligné, July 2004
Photographs by Philippe Lepage

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NEWSLETTER No. 8 August 2004



The giant model sheep which was the grand finale of the parade at the Fête du Mouton, Ligné, July 2004

Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to Newsletter 8. After the success and excitement of the official ceremonies, we are glad to report that the twinning links continue to be strong and active. Three weeks after the twinning ceremony on May Day weekend, 17 members of Ligné Rando arrived to join their Presteigne counterparts for a weekend of rambling. The combined group walked around the areas of Croft Castle and Offa's Dyke and relaxed afterwards over dinner at the Manor House, followed by an evening of singing. East Radnor Ramblers will be making a return visit to Ligné in 2005.

A lunch was held at the Radnorshire Arms on 20 June for the families who had acted as hosts for the French visitors. Although numbers were low, possibly due to the many other events taking place at the time, those present had an enjoyable get-together.

John and Jenny Kendall visited France over the weekend of 10/11 July for two memorable events. The first was the wedding of Pierre Girard, whose father André has done sterling work as President of Ligné's Comité de Jumelage. The second was to the Fête du Mouton in Ligné. John writes:

"The wedding was held on Saturday 10 July at a small community called Cercottes, about ten miles north of Orléans. Pierre's bride is Clémence Catel, whose father is this year's Mayor of Cercottes, so Monsieur Robert Catel was able to preside at the marriage of his own daughter. The Paris road runs just outside the Mairie, and many Parisians were making their way south for the holidays, so the civil ceremony was marked by passing cars hooting their congratulations. We then crossed the road to the Église St Martin, where the service had been chosen entirely by the happy couple, including some lovely music and an extract by a speech by President John F Kennedy about world peace. We were unable to stay for the party afterwards as we had to make the four-hour drive to Ligné to stay with our hosts Philippe and Christine Lepage.

The Fête du Mouton took place on Sunday 11 July and began with a procession around Ligné. In the procession were cows, horses and geese; many human animals as well, including Mayor Maurice Perrion dressed as the good shepherd; a silver band; and other musicians and children. The grand finale of the procession was an enormous model of a sheep. There were no actual sheep involved as there had been difficulties in managing these animals in previous years.

Then there was the fête itself, where there was a vide-grenier (car boot sale) with some great bargains. Catering was on a mammoth scale. Some 3000 four-course meals were served, with barbecued lamb as the main course. Christine Lepage was one of the helpers at the crêpe stall, where they got through 45 litres of milk, 45 dozen eggs and 45 kg of flour, and had to ask the manager of the supermarket to open up and allow them to buy further supplies. The musicians played all afternoon, with dancers performing in Breton costume, and there were sideshows such as tossing a bale of hay over a pole, plus fascinating displays of sheepdogs, sheep shearing and the old methods of dealing with wool. There was a stall for the Twinning Association which had some splendid photos and attracted much interest. In the evening there was dancing, finishing at 11 pm with some very impressive fireworks.

We enjoyed the whole thing very much. We strongly recommend that some of you make the journey there for next year's Fête on 10 July 2005, and enjoy it as much as we did."

After the Fête du Mouton, our own Sheep Music Festival played host to the Rennes band Sergent Pépère, who memorably followed Bandamania with their audio-visual performance at the twinning ceremony concert in Ligné last October. We were very pleased that the band had been invited and that they were so popular with the audience.

More events are planned for the autumn. We hope to hold a Hallowe'en Ceilidh at Titley Village Hall on Saturday 23 October, and a second Cheese and Wine evening at the Radnorshire Arms on Saturday 4 December, following last year's very successful one. Please watch out for details of these and other events on noticeboards in the Presteigne area and in the local press.

On a final note, we still have a few twinning souvenir mugs for sale at £7.50 each. Please contact John Kendall or Elwyn Powell via Bennett's Electrical Shop in Presteigne if you would like one.

We look forward to seeing you at the forthcoming events. Any ideas for further events and activities, or suggestions for the further development of the twinning, will be welcomed. A bientôt!

Meilleurs amitiés/best wishes

Patricia Wilson